HABS No. NY-5708-45

U.S. Military Academy - North Barracks
(Scott Barracks)

East and west of Brewerton Road, south of the Gymnasium
U.S. Military Academy
West Point
Orange County
New York

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - NORTH BARRACKS (Scott Barracks)

LOCATION:

East and west of Brewerton Road, south of the Gymnasium, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USGS, West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator

Coordinates: 18.586990.4582580.

PRESENT OWNER

AND OCCUPANT: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE:

Cadet Barracks.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The North Barracks was the result of the increased size of the Cadet Corps and characterizes a new generation of neogothic academic buildings at West Point in the 1930s, particularly those designed by Paul P. Cret.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

- 1. Date of erection: 1936 (drawings and cornerstone).
- 2. Architect: Paul P. Cret, Architects' Building, 17th and Sansom Streets, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
- 4. Builders: Gravell and Duncan were the structural engineers, along with Sandlass, Wieman and Doelman, associate engineers, Philadelphia. Moody and Hutchison of Philadelphia were the consulting engineers for electrical, plumbing and heating. Captain A. w. Parker was the Quartermaster in charge.
- 5. Original plans and construction: Original working drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy. These are ink-on-linen and dated May 13, 1936, with a revision date on some of August 10, 1936. All are noted "drawn by H.C.H." except one that was drawn by "B.M.B.G." With the exception of minor alterations, the North Barracks remains virtually unchanged from its original design and construction.
- 6. Alterations and additions: The North Barracks has survived with relatively few alterations. Those in the earliest years consisted of basement alterations such as replacement of bathtubs with shower stalls (1942) and new partition walls for trunk rooms (1943).

One of the more significant changes to the Cadet rooms was the replacement of the tongue-and-groove maple floors and baseboards in 1957 with 1/8" vinyl floor tile and baseboards. Other changes to the Cadet rooms includes the switch from incandescent to flourescent lights in 1969 (there is an indication from some drawings that some lighting rehabilitation was carried out in 1944 by York and Sawyer as part of a large plan) and the replacement of book shelves (no date). The interior alteration most affecting the original spatial arrangement is the undated conversion of eight Cadet rooms on the first floor into four Day Rooms; this was done by removing the partition wall, alcove walls and all interior fixtures.

Exterior alterations have been minimal. These include the placement of metal bars on three windows of the north wing's southwest corner (1971), the alteration by louvers of a basement window in the north sallyport and the replacement of leaded glass in the stairhall entrance doors with plain glass.

Undetermined modifications for the accommodation of female cadets were carried out in 1975 and 1977.

B. Historical Context: For the historical and architectural context of this building within the overall development of West Point, see HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2: "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy."

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural character: Architecturally, the North Barracks represents both the evolving, transitional character of American architecture prior to World War II and an example of Paul P. Cret's work at West Point in the mid-1930s. With the obvious exception of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, Cret's firm was the most prominent and prolific at West Point in this century. Cret's conscientious stripped neo-gothic design is part of a second generation of twentieth-century buildings at West Point and an interesting contemporary parallel to his more well known modernized classical designs.
- 2. Condition of fabric: The building is in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The North Barracks is an L-shaped building whose south and west wings pivot from a two-stepped northeast tower. The east elevation of the south wing is the principal facade, being 296'-0" in length as compared to 186'-3" for the west wing. Although it is recessed at each end, the south wing measures 53'-1" at its deepest point and 28'-3" and 30'-2" at its south and north ends respectively. The west wing is 47'-2" in width except for its western end, which is off-set to the north 12'-1" and is 49'-4" wide. Cret balanced the massing of the 21 bay facade by pulling the towers back from the recessed corners and by the extension of a veranda porch near the

southern end. Horizontally, the facade is broken into a two bay rhythm between the towers by a recessed stairhall bay. The building is principally five stories above a basement except for the seven story northeast tower and a four story section of the west wing that connects to the sallyport. Including the sallyport, the north elevation is 17 bays. This elevation is visually counter-balanced by a gradual step-down from the west corner tower to the sallyport before reaching the tall mass of the northeast corner.

- 2. Foundations: Concrete was used for both the footings and the foundation walls.
- 3. Walls: Like the majority of academic buildings at West Point, the North Barrack's exterior face is rock-faced granite laid in a random range ashlar pattern. But unlike many of the other buildings, the brown-tinted granite is local and came from the hill behind the Superintendent's House. The wall's texture is also unusual due to the random pattern of stones which project out about 4" from the wall plane.

Smoothly finished granite forms the window lintels and jambs while limestone is used for window sills, mullions, parapet coping, butress weatherings, embrasures (which project from the wall) and for a narrow beltcourse that runs between the second and third floors. A limestone cornice caps the lower height walls and runs across the face of the northeast tower at the same level; blank bosses punctuate the cornice across the tower section.

Although generally stripped of outright embellishment, exterior ornamentation consists of a sculptured limestone cadet head over the porch on the east elevation; an eagle and the U.S.M.A. shield emblem in limestone on the east face of the northeast tower near its tip; and limestone shield sculptures of a lion and a griffin on the north elevation over the sallyport entrance.

- 4. Structural systems: Above the concrete foundations the walls are load-bearing brick, faced with exterior granite and limestone (trim). Granite piers occur at certain places on the exterior. Interior walls are 3" and 4" tile which span concrete piers. Steel beams are used only where the building spans two sallyports. Both the floors and the roof are concrete slabs.
- 5. Porches, verandas, sallyports, buttresses: Typically, the North Barracks has a covered veranda, running along its length, which connects the entrances to the transverse stair wells. The veranda is continuous on the north elevation of the westwing but stops short of the ends of the south wing. The south wing's veranda is contained between a 14'-2" x 17'-6" porch on the south and a buttress with an arched stairway on the north. Low granite walls with limestone scuppers enclose the veranda except for wrought iron railings which are used at the west end of the north veranda. Granite steps, corresponding to the stair well bays, provide access to the 9'-10" wide veranda which is covered just above the first floor level with a concrete slab roof supported by concrete brackets on limestone impost blocks. Asphalt blocks cover the veranda floor.

The two sallyports of the North Barracks both span Brewerton Road just to the west of the south wing. The south sallyport, $41'-5" \times 21'-0"$, connects the building to a rock outcrop to the west and supports four floors of an ell wing extending to the west. A granite arch on each side of this sallyport provides the only decorative work except for the vertical grouping of windows.

The north sallyport, 20'-0" x 43'-0", occurs at the juncture of the west and south wings and is treated in a more decorative way than the south sallyport. Three-stepped buttresses flank a cut granite arch and the three story vertically-grouped windows with tre-foil and carved stone sculptures. Each sallyport has a stucco vaulted ceiling.

Buttresses occur at the ends of each wing and at the north sallyport. The largest of these is associated with the dominant tower at the northwest corner of the building.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The doorways are arranged in barracks fashion in parallel rows, eight on the east and four on the north. Each doorway is composed of alternating long and short jamb stones and a round-headed arch, all of limestone. A granite-arched doorway leads to the basement at the end of each wing.
 - Original oak doors with beaded vertical boards survive but their leaded rectangular quarrel windows have been replaced by a single light. The doors are $3'-8" \times 7'-3"$.
- Windows: With the exception of the pivoting basement windows, all windows are metal double-hung sash. Each window or grouping of windows is composed of lintels and jambs of granite and sills and mullions of limestone. All lower sash of the first floor windows are filled with a translucent "obscure glass," as are the bathroom windows. With minor exception, cadet rooms on floors 1-4 have 9-over-9 double-hung sash windows in groups of three separated by 7" limestone mullions; the masonry opening for each window is 2'-2" x 6'-1". All three windows have two 12-over-12 double-hung sash windows with limestone tre-foil carvings in front of each window. Certain sections of each long elevation have a fenestration rhythm of two cadet room bays separated by a staircase bay of single 12-over-12 windows; on the east and north elevations some of these staircase bays are recessed with 8-over-12, 20-over-20 and 16-over-20 light sash windows grouped vertically by metal spandrels.

Vertically-grouped triple window bays are found only on the east elevation of the northeast tower, the sallyports and in a less decorated state, on the northwest tower. These particular window bays are capped with carved limestone tre-foil tops which act as a screen in front of the top sash.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The 4-ply, built-up roof is second-generation and is hidden behind the parapet. A small penthouse is situated on the northeast tower roof.

- b. A plain limestone cornice with blank bosses bands the northeast and northwest towers and part of the south sallyport but is absent otherwise. A slightly projecting limestone coping caps the parapet walls.
- c. Towers: The roof line is interrupted by corners that rise to form embrasured towers. The northeast corner tower is dominant in height (elevation 261'-0") and decorative treatment.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Cret designed the building using a typical military barracks plan similar to that of the South Barracks or Central Barracks. The building is thus long but narrow with transverse passage/stair wells that create vertical rather than horizontal circulation. The 8' wide stair well on each floor provides access to two cadet rooms on either side and to a bathroom and toilet at the rear end of the hall. For most of the building this creates parallel cores of four rooms flanked by the stair wells. Exceptions occur at the recessed, or projecting, ends of the building.

The basement plan of the south and west wings consists of two long, open locker rooms which are the only longitudinally-connected interior spaces of the building. Trunk and storage rooms line the wall opposite the locker space. Other rooms in the basement are associated with custodial or mechanical functions.

A typical cadet room is $13'-6" \times 22'-0"$ with the end opposite the windows divided into sleeping alcoves by a 7'-0" long $\times 7'-6"$ high partition. Each room has a lavatory placed against the stair well wall. See "Study of Cadet Barracks" in the Supplemental Material section for a plan from 1949.

- 2. Stairways: Eight stairways serve the south wing and five serve the west wing. These are 3'-9" wide straight flights that occupy the left side of the 8'-0" stair well. Each open string staircase is composed of steel plate risers, quarry tile treads and wrought iron handrails and posts.
- 3. Flooring: All cadet rooms, day rooms and offices have a 1/8" vinyl tile floor with a vinyl baseboard. Quarry tile is used for all bathroom/toilet room and stairhall floors and baseboards. The basement floor is concrete.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Except for the basement walls, which are glazed terra cotta, the common wall finish is plaster. Keene's Cement plaster is used in the lavatory alcove of the cadet rooms. Exposed concrete beam and slab ceilings are common throughout the building.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: All interior doorways have steel jambs and steel doors 1-3/4" thick. Cadet rooms and bathroom/toilet rooms have doors 6'-8" x 2'-8" and 2'-6", respectively, with quarry tile thresholds. The bathroom/toilet room doors have a 1'-9" x 2'-10" panel of "obscure glass."

6. Built-in features and hardware: Each cadet room, in addition to a lavatory sink, medicine cabinet and towel rack, has a 10'-6" long x 10" wide x 4'-6" high wooden mantel. Under this mantel are book shelves, coat hooks and a vertical rack for rifles. A 2" x 4" hollow steel bar connects the 4-1/2" plaster-on-tile partition, separating the beds, to the walls. Eight 5" metal hooks are arranged on either side of the partition wall on a beaded, birch board. Four similar hooks are arranged on a 5" board that runs across the back wall of the alcoves 5'-10" from the floor.

Each stairhall has a birch frame mirror $(5'-0" \times 2'-0")$ and a bulletin board $(2'-8" \times 2'-0")$ set into the plaster wall.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: Steam radiators provide heat for the building.
- b. Lighting: Flourescent lighting is used throughout.
- c. Elevators: The building has one elevator, 5'-7'' square, in the tower section.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The North Barracks is principally oriented east towards the cadet area formed by the north and west wings of Washington Hall (HABS No. NY-5708-44). The secondary orientation is towards the north and the Gymnasium (HABS No. NY-5708-43). The building is up against a steep granite outcrop that rises to the west. An abutment of the south sallyport is actually built into the natural rock face. Squeezed as it is on the north (by the Gymnasium), south (by the original section of the Mess Hall) and west (by the outcrop), the building is only open to the quadrangle area to the east. The facade, then, can only be approached after entering the quadrangle area either through Washington Hall or via narrow vehicular passages on either side of the facade. Brewerton Road, extended as it was to pass to the west of the building through its two sallyports, is the only roadway approach from the south. The road in front of the Gymnasium is the approach from the north.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Original ink-on-linen working drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy. Subsequent alteration drawings are also found there.
- B. Early Views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections.
- C. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and unpublished sources: Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. See bibliographic essay in the Lange volume of this project for a listing of record groups.

2. Secondary and published sources: Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy.

Grashof, Bethanie C. "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and Selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York." HABS No. NY-5708.

Lange, Robie S. "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy." HABS No. NY-5708.

- D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: The office files of Paul Cret's successor firm, Harbeson, Hough, Livingston and Larson, Philadelphia.
- E. Supplemental Material:
 - Memorandum, "Study of Cadet Barracks" by Gerace, Wolfe and Crown, 5 August 1949, Post Planning Board File, U.S. Military Academy Archives.

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E. Supplemental Material

1. "Study of Cadet Barracks," 1949. From Post Planning Board File. U.S. Military

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

Academy Archives

WEST POINT, NEW YORK

5 August 1949

SUBJECT: Study of Cadet Barracks.

TO: Superintendent, U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.

- 1. Pursuant to Paragraph 4 of Special Orders No. 134, Hq., U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N. Y., dated 23 June 1949, a board of officers consisting of Lt. Col. Yale H. Wolfe, Lt. Col. Felix J. Gerace and Lt. Col. Francis J. Crown met on 6, 8, 14, 26 July and l August to consider and make recommendations regarding the utilization of all available living space within cadet barracks and the interior arrangements of cadet rooms for the purpose of standardization and elimination of nonessential items.
- 2. The board meetings included a survey of cadet barracks, consultations with both Regimental Commanders of the Tactical Department, their staffs, and various company tactical officers.

3. Utilization of Cadet Living Space

a. Discussion:

- (1) During the meetings the following cadet living rooms now occupied by other activities and agencies were considered for reconversion for cadet occupancy:
- (a) Three floors of either the 18th Division, Central Barracks, or the 49th Division, West Barracks.
- (b) Twelve (12) rooms currently used as Cadet Orderly Rooms.
- cadets appeared to be the most logical solution to the problem of making available the maximum number of living rooms for cadets. This solution would necessitate the crowding of the efficers, enlisted and civilian personnel of both regiments and the Department of Military Psychology and Leadership into approximately one half the space currently occupied by them. Relocating the three cadet language clubs currently occupying three rooms on the first floor of the 49th Division was considered but no suitable location could be found for them. The resultant room assignments in the 49th Division for the above mentioned organizations would them be seven for each Regimental Tactical organization (authorized personnel 20 per Regiment) and five for the Department of Military Psychology and Leadership (authorized personnel 15), with two rooms on the sixth floor available as conference rooms. The cadet living space currently assigned the Tactical

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Department is believed adequate but not excessive. Any reduction in space for the Tactical Department would jeopardize the proper implementation of the Military Psychology and Leadership program of the Tactical Department which requires each Company Tactical Officer to have frequent, intimate personal interviews with each cadet within his company. It is believed most undesirable when considering the mission of the Military Academy to restrain the activities of the Tactical Officers in their relations with cadets in order to regain 11 living rooms for cadets.

- (3) The feasibility of providing space for either Taotical Officers or the Department of Military Psychology and Leadership within the Central Post Area but not in Cadet Barracks was investigated. The only space possibility, Building 777, was found not to be practical since the space in this building is used at different times by the Army Athletic Association, Cadet Ness, and Corps of Cadets.
- (4) Consolidation of Orderly Rooms, i.e. two (2) companies to one room, was also considered. However, in the opinion of the Board, the volume of company administrative details carried out in each orderly room require that each company have its own orderly room.
- (5) Cadet living rooms now occupied by other activities and agencies, not available for reoccupancy by cadets are:
 - (a) Supply rooms in the 7th Division.
 - (b) Cadet Chaplain's Office in the 19th Division.
 - (o) Cadet Model Room in the 19th Division.

b. Conolusions:

- (1) Under existing conditions cadet barracks space is being utilized as efficiently and economically as possible.
- (2) The size of the Tactical Organization of each Regiment and the Brigade Staff is not excessive nor are they occupying more space than is required. No suitable space in the vicinity of the cadet barracks is available for reassignment to either Regiment of the Tactical Department or to the Department of Military Psychology and Leadership.
- (3) Cadet Barracks space currently assigned to various agencies and activities for purposes other than cadet housing is considered to be appropriate and required for the proper operation of the activities and agencies involved. However, the question of utilization of living space in each room in permanent lettered companies cannot be judged at this time because permanent cadet room assignments for the Academic Year have not been made as of this date.

4. Interior Arrangement of Rooms

a. Discussion:

A large number of cadet rooms were examined by the board but many were used for storage of personal belongings of cadets absent on leave or training trips and those occupied by the new Fourth Class were without radios, phonographs, books, files, etc., so that a true picture of clutter in cadet rooms could not be determined at this time. Interrogation of Regimental Commanders and members of the Brigade Staff reveals the following steps have been or will be taken to reduce clutter and to standardize the interior arrangement of cadet rooms:

- (1) All moveable book shelves have been removed.
- (2) All books in excess of current needs have been placed in trunk rooms. Books have been moved from tops of desks where double study desks have been available.
- (3) The following items and equipment will be removed from rooms and moved into trunk rooms during the Academio Year:

Combat boots, helmets, and helmet liners.

- (4) Radio and phonograph tables will be moved back against walls. Radios and phonographs will be removed from all desks.
- (5) Athletic and hobby equipment will be removed from rooms and placed in basement lookers.
- (6) Attempt is being made to have similar type desks, chairs, wall lockers, etc. in any one room and to have similar floor plans for each room wherever possible. Because of the interior structural design a different set of standard plans for arrangement of rooms are being published by each Regiment for each type of barracks; Scuth Barracks, Central Barracks, North Barracks, and West Barracks. Floor plans showing furniture arrangement are attached as inclosures.
- (7) Standardization of furniture in cadet rooms as funds become available is continuing. During the Fiscal Year 1949 the following items of cadet rooms furniture were obtained to replace worn out items, or as in the case of double study desks, to continue a program of providing one such desk in each cadet room:

125 Double Study Desks, should arrive about 15 Sept. 1949.

407 Steel Wall Lookers, already received.

110 Steel Chairs, should arrive about 1 September 1949.

100 Single Steel Tables, already received.

(8) Wood wall lockers are being moved to South Barracks to replace steel lockers therein so as to have the entire South Barracks squipped with wooden lockers.

b. Conclusion:

The steps to be taken by the Department of Tactics will reduce clutter in cadet rooms and will result in standardization of arrangement of furniture in rooms in each cadet barracks building.

5. Recommendations

This Board recommends that:

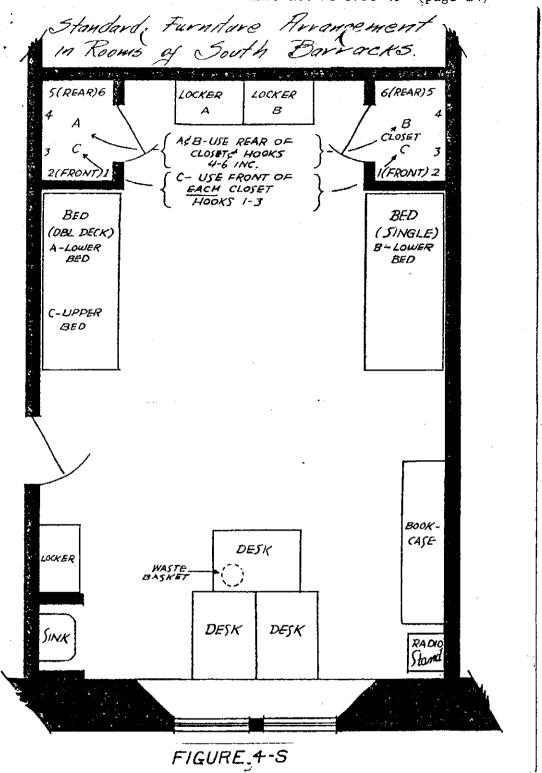
- a. The cadet living space currently assigned to other agencies and other activities and organizations remain so assigned.
- b. To prevent further encroachment on cadet living space, all requests for conversion of cadet living rooms to other purposes be acted upon by a board of not less than three officers appointed by the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy.
- c. No change be made in the currently authorized officer strength of the Regimental or Brigade Organizations of the Department of Taotics
- d. In quartering cadets in rooms during the Academic Year, assignments be so made as to utilize to the maximum all available three man rooms thereby holding the number of temporary two and four man rooms to the minimum.
- e. Steps ourrently being taken by the Department of Tactics to reduce clutter in cadet rooms and to standardize interior arrangement of rooms be continued.
- f. For future plans, the double study desk be made a standard type desk for all cadet rooms. All cadet chairs procured in the future be a metallic type of such design that when not occupied by a cadet it can be pushed into the opening in the double study desk or under the table so as to make available maximum free floor space in the cadet rooms.
- g. Standardization of furniture in cadet living rooms be based on the structural design of the room and, for economic reasons, furniture once installed for a certain number of occupants of a room not be removed from rooms if the number of occupants decreases.

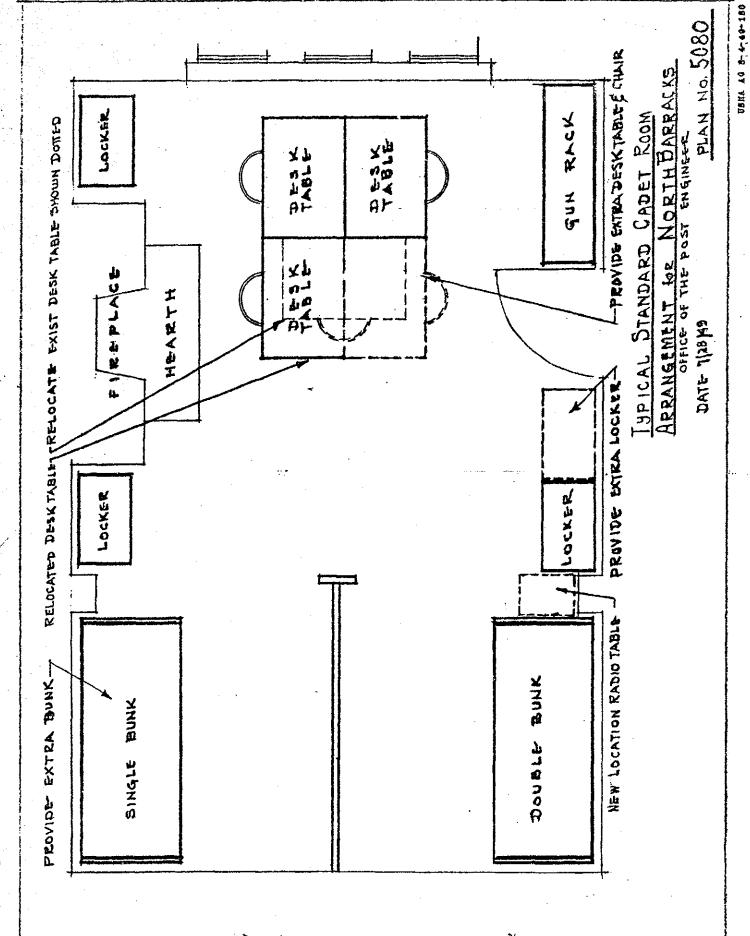
YALE H. WOLFE, Lt. Col., C.K.C., President.

FELIX J. GERACE, Lt. Col., Q.M.C., Member.

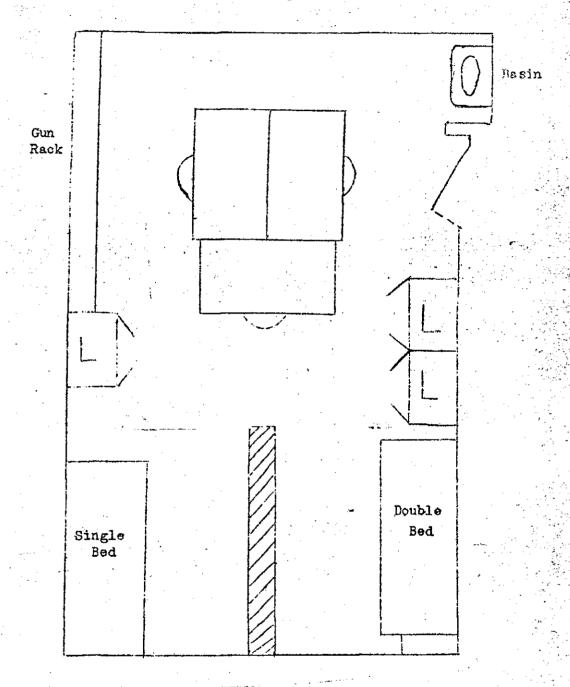
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Typical Standard Furniture Arrangement in Rooms of West Barracks



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ALMINISTRATIVE FOOM

49th Division - 17 rooms 18th Division - 14 rooms 7th Division - 1 room Orderly Booms - 24 rooms Cadet Activity Dogge 40th Div (3)

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is part of a multi-year project sponsored by the National Park Service and the United States Military Academy, explained in the United States Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 1, "Methodology." This written documentation was prepared by Travis C. McDonald, Jr., architectural historian, in 1982-1985 based on fieldwork conducted in 1982.